# SEMANTIC AMBIGUITY IN THE TASKS OF THE BRITISH TV SHOW *TASKMASTER*

**THESIS**

*Submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Sciences Hasanuddin University in Partial Fulfilment of Requirement to Obtain Bachelor Degree in English Literature Study Program*

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**2023**

## LEGITIMATION

### THESIS

### SEMANTIC AMBIGUITY IN THE TASKS OF THE

### BRITISH TV SHOW TASKMASTER

### BY

### SATRIA PRIMAPUTRA

Student ID Number: F041191071

It has been examined before the Board of Thesis Examination on 23rd June 2023

and is declare to have fulfilled the requirements.

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### AGREEMENT

On June 23rd, 2023, the Board of Thesis Examination has kindly approved a thesis by Nurfadillah (F041191071) entitled *Semantic Ambiguity in the Tasks of the British TV Show Taskmaster* submitted in fulfillment of one of the requirements to obtain Sarjana Degree in English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.
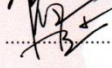
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## <u>DECLARATION</u>

The thesis by Satria Primaputra (F041191071) entitled *Semantic Ambiguity in the Tasks of the British TV Show Taskmaster* has been revised as advised during the examination 23rd June 2023 and is approved by the Board of Undergraduate Thesis Examiners:

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Hereby, the writer declares that this thesis entitled:

**Semantic Ambiguity in the Tasks of the British TV Show *Taskmaster***

is written by himself. This thesis does not contain any materials which have been published by other people, and it does not cite other people's ideas except the quotations and references.

If in the future it is proven that there is a part or all of the contents of this thesis are plagiarized, the author is willing to accept the sanction for his action.

Makassar, 26th June 2023

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## APPROVAL FORM

With reference to the letter of Dean of Faculty of Cultural Sciences Hasanuddin University No. 283/UN4.9.1/KEP/2023 regarding supervision, we hereby confirm to approve the undergraduate thesis draft by **SATRIA PRIMAPUTRA** (F041191071) to be examined at the English Literature Study Program of Faculty of Cultural Sciences.

Makassar, 31 May 2023

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Makassar, 31 May 2023

The Writer,

Satria Primaputra

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# ABSTRACT

**SATRIA PRIMAPUTRA (F041191071).** *Semantic Ambiguity in the Tasks of the British TV Show Taskmaster* (supervised by **Sukmawaty** and **Simon Sitoto**)

This study aims to describe the occurrences of lexical, structural, and metaphorical ambiguity in the task of the British tv show Taskmaster, and to figure out why one type of ambiguity become the most dominant in the show.

The study was conducted using descriptive qualitative research design. Observation and content analysis was used to collect and analyse the data. The data used in this study were field task instructions in the tv show Taskmaster from series 1 to 12, along with three special episodes.

In the study, the writer finds all three types of semantic ambiguity, with lexical ambiguity being the most dominant with 37 occurrences out of 54 total ambiguities. Lexical ambiguity is the most dominant due to metaphors not often used in everyday language, many metaphors become established into polysemy, the writing of the show tasks minimises structural ambiguity, and how language always developing new terms and meanings causes many words becoming polysemy and homonymy.

Keywords: semantics, ambiguity, tv show, Taskmaster

# ABSTRAK

**SATRIA PRIMAPUTRA (F041191071).** *Ambiguitas Semantik dalam Tugas pada Acara TV Inggris Taskmaster* (dibimbing oleh **Sukmawaty** dan **Simon Sitoto**)

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan kejadian ambiguitas leksikal, struktural, dan metaforis dalam tugas pada acara televisi inggris *Taskmaster*, dan alasan kenapa satu jenis ambiguitas menjadi yang terbanyak dalam acara tersebut.

Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Observasi dan analisis konten digunakan untuk mengumpulkan dan menganalisis data. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah instruksi *field task* dalam acara TV *Taskmaster* dari musim 1 sampai 12, ditambah tiga episode spesial.

Dalam penelitian ini penulis menemukan ketiga jenis ambiguitas semantik yang dicari, dengan ambiguitas leksikal sebagai yang paling dominan dengan 37 kejadian dari total 54 kejadian ambiguitas. Ambiguitas leksikal menjadi yang paling dominan karena metafora jarang digunakan dalam bahasa sehari-hari, banyak metafora menjadi polisemi, penulisan tugas *Taskmaster* yang mengurangi ambiguitas struktural, dan bagaimana sifat bahasa yang selalu mengembangkan istilah dan arti baru membuat banyak kata menjadi polisemi atau homonimi.

Keywords: semantik, ambiguitas, acara tv, *Taskmaster*

**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION**

## A. Background

Language is one of the most important aspects of human life. Just like how Delahunty (2010) put it, language is a system that connects ideas of humans with tangible signs other humans could receive that make communication possible. Without it, humans would not be able to communicate with one another. Because of this vitality, like other important fields in human life, the language of humans is studied in one scientific field. That field is named linguistics, meaning the study of the nature of language and linguistic communication (Akmajian et al, 2010).

The core of communication among humans is meanings. Whether it is the meaning of a word, phrase, sentence, or the whole utterance. Communication could only be possible with the shared meaning of language between its participants. Thus, it was important to characterize the language, which in turn would describe the meanings in that language (Akmajian et al, 2010). This is done in the sub-division of linguistics called semantics, which simply means the study of linguistic meaning (Cruse, 2000).

However, it become a problem when a word with multiple meanings or a sentence with more than one interpretation are encountered. Without enough information and context, it would be difficult to determine the correct meaning of that utterance. This is what in semantics named as ambiguity, which is when an element of an utterance like a word could be interpreted in more than one way (Kroeger, 2019). Ambiguity as a topic has been studied by many linguists and many

have defined the types of ambiguity. The most common ones were lexical ambiguity (ambiguity caused by a word), and structural ambiguity (ambiguity caused by how a sentence is written) (Kroeger, 2019). Aside from the two, one that interested the writer was metaphoric ambiguity put forward by Engstrøm (1996), which is an ambiguity caused by the usage of metaphor that could be interpreted in either its literal meaning, metaphoric meaning, or both, and from the metaphoric predicate's paraphrasing. This certain type of ambiguity was interesting for the writer because how it was not as well-known as lexical and structural, and there was a research gap that existed due to the lack of references regarding metaphoric ambiguity.

Ambiguity is a commonly occurring phenomenon in daily communication, whether it is realised or not, and whether it is planned or not (Kaufer, 1983). This was what the writer stumbled upon when the writer watched a British television show named Taskmaster.

Taskmaster is a British comedy show that aired since 2016. This show is a panel show, which is a common tv show concept in Britain where a group of contestants, usually comedians, traded banters and witty jokes to earn points from the host. What made Taskmaster unique for the writer were how the contestants, instead of just doing banters, have to do a set of tasks which created comedic moments from their efforts, and from how they defended their effort in front of the host, the titular Taskmaster. Aside from the humour aspects, the writer also likes the show for the cleverness and cunning of its contestants in doing their tasks. Whether by exploiting a loophole in the task, using unconventional methods, or

even abusing the ambiguity in the instruction of the task to ease their way. It was not rare that their alternative interpretations were rewarded with a high score. One of the first and most notable examples of the exploitation of ambiguity in the show's task was in Series 2 Episode 1 by the contestant Richard Osman on the task *"place these three exercise balls on the yoga mat on the top of that hill"*. While the other contestants did the common thing by bringing the three balls to the top of the hill and then put it on the mat, Osman interpreted it differently and took the mat to the foot of the hill where the balls were, resulting in him became the fastest in finishing the task and won the task. After the writer watched the show Taskmaster further, the writer found more instances of ambiguity whether it is realized by the contestants or not, and whether it is planned or not to give the contestants alternative methods or for jokes.

Although ambiguity has been studied for a long time, the writer found that existing studies more often look into written research objects such as stories or news articles, rather than audio-visual media such as tv shows. Along with the non-existence of study using the tv show Taskmaster as its object of study made the writer saw a research gap that need to be filled. Therefore, the writer is very motivated and interested in making the tv show Taskmaster as the object of this study entitled **Semantic Ambiguity in the Tasks of the British TV Show *Taskmaster*** to scientifically explore the phenomena of ambiguity in the lexical, structural, and metaphoric type in the task of the tv show Taskmaster.

**B. Identification of the Problems**

1. Some task instructions in the British TV Show Taskmaster contain semantic ambiguity

2. There are several causes of semantic ambiguity that appear in the task instruction of the show.

3. There are semantic ambiguities in the task that is realised and not realised by the contestants.

4. There are semantic ambiguities in the task that is planned and not planned by the writers of the show.

5. There are contexts that happens around the semantically ambiguous utterance in the task instruction of the show that affects the contestants' interpretation of the task.

6. It is difficult to identify an ambiguous utterance in real-life situation due to the context that surrounds the utterance.

**C. Scope of the Problems**

1. The subject of the research is the task instruction sentence in the TV Show Taskmaster, whether its ambiguity is noticed or not by the participants of the show and whether its ambiguity is planned or not by the writers of the show,

2. The theories for the types of semantic ambiguity, which are lexical, structural and metaphorical ambiguity that is used to analyse the meanings of the sentence and the ambiguity, along with any context surrounding the utterance that may affect the interpretation of the contestants.

**D. Research Questions**

From the problems that the writer has identified, the research questions is formulated using the scope of research to create what the writer looks to answer in this research, which are:

1.  What are the types of semantic ambiguity found in the tasks of the TV Show Taskmaster?

2.  What are the reason of most dominant semantic ambiguity type that occur in the tasks of the TV Show Taskmaster?

**E. Research Objectives**

As for the research objectives, in this study the writer aims to:

1.  To identify the types of semantic ambiguity that occur in the tasks of the TV Show Taskmaster

2.  To describe the reason of most dominant semantic ambiguity type that occurred in the tasks of the TV Show Taskmaster

**F. Significance of the Study**

1.  Theoretical Benefit

This study hopes to contribute to the existing knowledge of the field studied. By giving the readers general understanding of semantic ambiguity, the types of semantic ambiguity and how it could occur in utterances, in this case in form of instruction in a TV show. Especially to the knowledge of metaphoric ambiguity type which rarely explored in studies. This study also hopes to be a point of

reference for future researchers that also wish to study the phenomena of semantic ambiguity that happen in different medias, especially audio-visual medias like movie, soap opera, or comedy show.

2. Practical Benefit

   This study could be used by anyone as a reference for the occurrence of semantic ambiguity in a TV show or similar audio-visual media and how that ambiguity could be capitalized to create an entertaining piece of television. It also could be used as a reference on how to make clearer and more disambiguated instruction so that the participant cannot take advantage of a loophole created by semantic ambiguity. Aside from use in entertainment media, this study aims to help the readers to identify semantically ambiguous utterances in everyday life.

# CHAPTER II

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## A. Previous Studies

There have been researches already done within the field of semantic ambiguity. Although that, in this section the writer will show how the writer's research is different from existing ones and why it's important for the writer to carry out this study.

1. **Dimple Kapadia, 2013, in his study *Types of Semantic Ambiguity Found in the Editorials of Jakarta Post Daily Newspaper*.**

   In this study, the writer of the article explores the semantic ambiguity in the utterances of the editorials in the Jakarta Post newspaper that was published between November to December 2012. Here the researcher looks into two types of semantic ambiguities according to Kent Bach (2009, as cited in Kapadia, 2013): lexical and structural. From their research, they found 113 ambiguous utterances, with 53 (46.90%) cases of lexical ambiguity and 60 (53.10%) occurrences of structural ambiguity.

2. **Intan Nur Charina, 2017, in her study *Lexical and Syntactic Ambiguity in Humor.***

   In this journal, the researcher looks into the two types of semantic ambiguity, lexical and syntactic ambiguity, as these two are usually used in humour. The researcher analyses the ambiguity in newspaper headlines, advertisement slogans and jokes, all of which were taken from electronic sources. From the 25 data, 12

are lexically ambiguous and 13 are syntactically ambiguous, of which the researcher describes each of the reasons and how the ambiguity occurs.

3. **Desy Eka Nur Aini, 2020, in her study** *A Case of Ambiguity in the Ernest Hemingway's Short Stories: Semantics Study*.

In this research, the researcher looks at semantic ambiguity in Ernest Hemmingway's short stories. The researcher investigates lexical, structural and referential ambiguity (Katz, 1971, as cited in Aini, 2020). The research method used is descriptive qualitative. From the object, the researcher found 45 ambiguity data, of which 32 are lexical, 6 structural and 7 referential ambiguities. Besides that, the researcher found 11 data of ambiguity cause, 1 data of word order, 2 for improper or misused punctuation and 8 data for faulty pronoun reference

4. **Ermika, Erika Sinambela, Arsen Nahum Pasaruibu, 2021, in their study** *Lexical and Grammatical Ambiguities in English Textbook for Tenth Grade Students*.

In this journal article, the researchers look into the semantic ambiguities of lexical and grammatical (or structural) type in a 10-th-grade English Textbook, more exactly in the reading texts contained in that book. The research uses a descriptive qualitative method. Of the 21 reading texts, the researchers found 27 sentences that have ambiguous meanings with 12 occurrences of lexical ambiguity and 17 occurrences of grammatical ambiguity.

The differences between the previous researches and the writer's research are that this study is looking at different classifications of semantic ambiguity. The writer uses, apart from the commonly used type which is lexical and structural

ambiguity, the writer also tries to look at the occurrence of metaphorical ambiguity that is brought up by Engstrøm (1995). Furthermore, while the writer does this research via a descriptive qualitative method like the previous studies, they mostly only looked at how much the type of ambiguity occurs and/or how each phenomenon of ambiguity occurs, meanwhile the writer also tried to explain the reason how the frequency of the ambiguity types appearing as such. The object in the writer's study is also unique from the existing ones, as the writer specifically looked at instructions in a tv show, while the others take any utterance/sentence from a written media that may be ambiguous.

## B. Theoretical Background

### 1. Language

Language is a concept that always exists in a human's everyday life. Humans have used language to communicate thoughts and needs since birth. But what is exactly a language? Delahunty (2010) defines language as a system that connects intangible thoughts with tangible elements that could be heard, seen, or touched so that the communication of one's ideas is possible. Antila (1989) similarly describes language as a kind of sign system which connects two areas, the non-linguistic real or imagined world (the topic being talk about) and the physical speech sounds (noises humans produce). Cruse (2000) describes language as a complex sign system made to facilitate humans' infinite expressive capacity using an elementary sign that associates a meaning and form.

From those definitions by the scholars the writer could summarize that language is a system of signs that connects a human's idea with an expression that another human could comprehend so that the idea could be transferred to another person.

**2. Linguistics**

Just like other fields of humans' life, humans' language is also studied scientifically, the scientific field that investigates language is called *linguistics.* To be more exact, the field of linguistics is concerned with the matter of the nature of language and linguistic communication (Akmajian et al., 2010). Linguistics itself is further divided into several subdisciplines:

a. Phonetics

The field of phonetics is concerned with how the speech sound made in the vocal tract (articulation) and the physical (acoustic) properties of the sound waves produced (Akmajian et al., 2010, p. 68).

b. Phonology

While the concrete attribute of speech sound is studied in phonetics, phonology deals with the abstract rule of how sound structured and its pattern in a language (Akmajian et al., 2010, p. 109).

c. Morphology

Morphology explores words. What are words, how it made, how complex words are made, and how a word in one language relate to another word of another language (Akmajian et al., 2010, p. 17).

d. Syntax

Syntax according to Akmajian et al (2010) concern on analysing the structure of phrases and sentences. How a phrase and sentence built and how human able to recognise patterns of sentences (p. 149).

e. Semantics

To put it simply, semantics are the study of the meaning of the linguistic units which are the words, phrases and sentences. Semantics questions the meaning of a unit of language, where it originated and relation between meanings (Akmajian et al., 2010, pp. 226-239).

f. Pragmatics

Pragmatics by Akmajian et al (2010) put as the term for the study of language use in the field of linguistic communication, in relation to the language structure and context of the utterance (p. 164)

**3. Semantics**

As mentioned in the previous section, semantics is commonly said to be a study of meaning (Lyons, 1995). Cruse (2000) more specifically explains that semantics means a study of linguistic meaning or meaning in language. Further, Yule (2010) details more by saying that semantics is the study of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. Because language is commonly understood as a system to communicate and that communication could only be succeeded because words and sentences have certain meanings shared between its participants, thus semantics is important to characterize the language as it describes those meanings of words and sentences in it (Akmajian et al., 2010).

In linguistics, semantics is often mirrored with Pragmatics as both are like two sides of a coin. Both are a major division of the study of meaning in language. The difference is pragmatics concern with the aspects that affect the meaning outside of the language (contexts), while semantics does not (Kroeger, 2019).

## 4. Ambiguity

In language, it is possible for a word to have more than one sense or meaning. This is what Kroeger (2019) meant by ambiguity. A word (and consequentially its sentence) is ambiguous if it has more than one sense and a sentence is ambiguous if it has more than one paraphrase which was not themselves paraphrasing one another (Hurford et al., 2007, p. 128). Similarly, according to Cruse (2000), ambiguity could be characterized by an existing antagonism, where there is one reading of the sentence that is common and then there is another that is competing for the reader's attention.

Having more than one sense had to be differentiated from having more than one referential, as having different denotations in different contexts does not necessarily mean the word, phrase, or sentence has more than one sense (Kroeger, 2019, p. 23). For example, in a dietic expression like *my car*, the meaning or the thing that is referenced will change in different contexts or with different utterer.

David Kaufer (1983) classifies ambiguity in four based on the spectrum of how it is planned or not by the speaker/writer and realised or not by the listener/reader

a. Unplanned covert ambiguity

The most common one occurs in daily conversation, where ambiguity is neither planned nor recognized by any participant. This is usually due to the clear context of which the utterance is surrounded by. For example, the common example of ambiguity is the word *bank,* which could mean (1) a financial institution or (2) a sloped side of a river, like in the sentence *I'm going to the bank* if the utterer said that while dressing in tidily, the possibility of ambiguity is probably gone as someone usually will do that if he wants to do business in that <u>*bank.*</u>

b. Planned covert ambiguity

In this case, the ambiguity is planned and known by the speaker/writer but unnoticed by the audience. This is usually done by a politician to answer a question while avoiding to answer it; thus, the audience may feel has been answered as they did not notice the ambiguity

c. Unplanned overt ambiguity

The opposite of the previous entry, where the listener detects the ambiguity before the speaker does. This is because the utterance is unintentionally made ambiguous. For example, if there is not enough context to clarify the sentence *flying planes can be dangerous*, the sentence became unclear whether it refers to *the action of flying* or *the object plane that fly* that is dangerous.

d.  Planned overt ambiguity

> In the cases that include this type, the speaker/writer plans the ambiguity and intent to share that plan. This often utilised in puns, jokes, legal languages and song lyrics.

5.  **Types of Ambiguity**

Ambiguity has been divided into several categories according to what element in language causes the ambiguity by linguists. Dai (2021) categorizes ambiguity into phonetic ambiguity, lexical ambiguity, pragmatic ambiguity and syntactic ambiguity. Kroeger (2019) on the other hand sees ambiguity as lexical ambiguity, structural ambiguity and referential ambiguity. Meanwhile, there is also another ambiguity type like metaphoric ambiguity by Engstrøm (1996) that is caused by use of metaphors.

6.  **Semantic Ambiguity**

Semantic ambiguity from what the writer have known about semantics and ambiguity could be understood specifically as a phenomenon of utterance that could be interpreted in more than one sense from what could be seen inside the text, which means although the context of the sentence clears up the ambiguity, it could still be ambiguous semantically. Thus, a type of ambiguity could also be a type of semantic ambiguity and in reverse, a type of ambiguity may be not included in semantic ambiguity (e.g., phonetical ambiguity, pragmatic ambiguity).

From Kaufer's division of ambiguity from how it is realised and planned by the participants in the previous part, semantic ambiguity may be seen mostly in the

*unplanned covert ambiguity* kind, as the context that is usually there when dismissing the ambiguity is disregarded and only the text determines its ambiguity.

An ambiguity that is also a type of semantic ambiguity could be classified into three categories according to its source:

a. Lexical ambiguity

Lexical ambiguity means that the cause of the ambiguity of the utterance comes from a word in that utterance (Kroger, 2019). To be exact, the multiple meaning that developed and attached to that certain word. The word that causes ambiguity is commonly categorized into two, as Lyons (1995, pp. 55-58) describes:

1) Polysemy

Where one lexeme (word) has more than one meaning that is still related to one another. Or it could be said as two words that come from the same root. For example, in the utterance *he's just too **cool***. The adjective **cool** in that sentence could mean either (1) he is of low temperature, or (2) he has very fashionable style (Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 383). Both meanings were based on the same etymology.

2) Homonymy

Where two or more lexemes have different and unrelated meanings but have the same form. For example, in the sentence *I'll wait for you near the **bank**,* the word ***bank*** could refer to the word meaning (1) a financial institution, or (2) a sloping side of a river (Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 128).

Kroeger (2019) furtherer deliberated that lexical ambiguity must be differentiated from vagueness and indeterminate.

1) Indeterminate

Indeterminate is where the word has a variable reference that does not require us to distinguish multiple senses in one word. For example, the word *punch* means to hit someone with a closed fist, but it is indeterminate which hand is used, left or right.

2) Vagueness

Vagueness occurs when a lexeme has no precise limit on the definition, thus it is very context-dependent. For example, with the word *fat,* a person may be considered fat in one place (like in their family), but maybe not in another (like in their school) (pp. 80-81).

b. Structural Ambiguity

Structural ambiguity meanwhile, is when the cause of the ambiguity is not in the word, but in the structure of the sentence. This happens because two different structures could be assigned by grammar in language to the same word string (Kroeger, 2019). Or in a more detailed explanation by Oaks (2010), structural ambiguity could happen if either the sentence has multiple syntactic interpretations, or if multiple syntactic relationships are implied between the elements of the structure (p. 15). In simpler words, structural ambiguity could be down to the question of *what goes with what* in a sentence (Hurford et al., 2007).

Structural ambiguity could be classified into three sub-types according to the reason the structure has ambiguity: attachment ambiguity, gap-finding ambiguity and analytical ambiguity (Lihong and Weijie, 2018).

1) Attachment Ambiguity

A sentence is said as attachment ambiguity if there is more than one place where an element that made the sentence may be attached. This often happens in a sentence with:

a) A prepositional phrase that may have more than one noun phrase or verb phrase it is attached to. For example, *he hit the man **with a stick***. The prepositional phrase *with a stick* could be attached to the subject *he* as in he hit using a stick, or the object *the man* as in the man is using a stick to help him walk but got hit.

b) Subsentence, which could be a place for an adverb or prepositional. For example, *Rose said that Nancy had taken the cleaning out yesterday.* The word "yesterday" could be attached to either the action of saying the subsentence (as in *Yesterday, Rose said that Nancy had taken the cleaning out*) or the action of cleaning in the subsentence (as in *Nancy had taken the cleaning out yesterday, said Rose*).

c) Adverbial, when it may attach to a whole sentence or the verb of the sentence. For example, *Happily, Nancy cleaned up the mess Rose had left.* The adverb *happily* may attach to the sentence as in what Nancy did was a good happening, or the verb phrase *cleaned up* as in Nancy cleaned up the mess with a happy feeling.

2) Gap-Finding Ambiguity

Where there is more than one gap could be filled in the sentence which creates more than one interpretation of the sentence, for example, 'Two *cars were reported stolen by Groveton police yesterday*". In this sentence, there are two gaps in the clause either (1) *the Groveton police* were the ones who *report* the stolen two cars, or (2) *the Groveton police* were the ones who *steal* the two cars and get reported.

3) Analytical Ambiguity

A sentence is an analytical ambiguity when the sentence has part building it that possible to be interpreted in more than one grammatical role. For example: *She brought the **horse** meat.* Here, the *horse* could be analysed as either an adjective as part of the object noun phrase *horse meat* (as in the meat is cut from a horse) or as a noun of itself and becomes an indirect object (as in the woman giving meat to the horse).

In structural ambiguity, like in lexical ambiguity, there are also concepts that is close but not considered as structural ambiguity by Oaks, that is, vagueness, garden path sentences, focus ambiguities, metalinguistic ambiguities, consecutively altered constructions (2010, pp. 18-21).

1) Vagueness

Like in lexical, vagueness means that the sentence's meaning is not specific. Meanwhile, ambiguity means that the sentence has more than one specific interpretation. An example is that when Clinton asked about missing e-mails hidden by his staff, he answered with *I believe that was known years ago.*

As the columnist William Safire noted, "Sure, he knew and Ruff (his attorney) know. But no grand jury or congressional committee was told." This is vagueness because it is vague regarding who knew about that email.

2) Garden path sentences

Garden path sentences are sentences that led their recipient down to a path in its interpretation until the recipient realizes that the interpretation or path they took cannot work syntactically and they have to reinterpret that sentence. The garden path sentence is not an ambiguity because when seen as a whole, it did not give more than one structural interpretation. For example, *Last night my neighbour cooked his dog… some meat* the pause made the recipient think that their neighbour cooks his dog, but after the sentence continued and the receiver reinterprets the sentence, it is clear in the structure that the dog is not being cooked but cooked for.

3) Focus ambiguity

Focus ambiguity means that there is more than one possible focus. It is not a form of structural ambiguity because it is more about which part of the sentence the participant is focusing on and not ambiguous on the structure. This is commonly used in humour. This could be seen in the following dialogue:

*A: Why are you always scratching yourself?*

*B: Nobody else knows where I itch!*

Here, B focused on the word *yourself* thus he answers as such. Meanwhile if B focus on the word *scratching*, most likely they will answer why he scratches all the time.

4) Metalinguistic ambiguity

Metalinguistic ambiguity means ambiguity because of an interpretation that directly involves the form of the utterance itself. The example that Oaks used is from an ad for Kay Jewelers *'Every kiss begins with Kay.'* Orally, *K* and *Kay* have the same sound (homophone) that allows the interpretation of (1) Kay Jewelers' jewellery is trigger for every kiss, or (2) the word *kiss* starts with the letter *K* every time. The second interpretation is a form of metalinguistics as it involves the form of the word *kiss* and explains that it begins with the sound *K*.

5) Consecutively altered constructions

Consecutively altered constructions are what Oaks name a chain of sentences that is followed by another sentence that has a similar structure but different. It is not structurally ambiguous as it not giving more than one sense of meaning, only seemingly. For example, in the pharmaceutical company Bayer's slogan *You Get Older. You Get Smarter.* **You Get Bayer**, in here the first two clauses use the linking verb *get* while the third use the verb *get*, along with the first two using the adjective with the suffix *-er*, made the third clause *You Get Bayer* seemingly using the same structure while it's not. Even that, the third clause is not structurally ambiguous, only seemingly so.

c. Metaphoric ambiguity

Aside from lexical and structural ambiguity, there is also ambiguity that occurs because of the use of metaphor. Metaphor is one figurative way of speech that use comparison between two different things (Kroeger, 2019, p. 98), it is a mental operation used by the speaker to structure and construct abstract knowledge

and experience in a more concrete form (Hurford et al., 2007, p. 331). For example, someone who often stays up late could be said metaphorically as a *night owl*.

Engstrøm (1996) claimed that metaphors have rampant semantic ambiguity, and can only be disambiguated through contexts outside of the sentence (p.7). Although Binkley (1974, p. 137, as cited in Engstrøm, 1996, p.7) claimed that metaphor could be as straightforwardly a truth as literal language, it could still be ambiguous as seen in the example given by Engstrøm in the sentence '*John caught with his pants down'*. This sentence could mean multiple things, either:

1) A wife finds her husband John in bed having an affair with another woman

2) John is caught embezzling by his boss.

3) John, who is taking off his pants for a medical examination, seen by a passing nurse

4) John is dressing up in the morning.

The first situation is correct both literally and metaphorically, the second interpretation has the metaphor literally false (as he did not get his pants down) although it's still metaphorically true (he was caught when doing a crime), the third is the opposite of before as the metaphor would be literally true but not metaphorically (as it's just stating the fact John caught with his pants down), the last interpretation is both literally and metaphorically false as he isn't seen by anyone and not doing any wrongdoings (1996, p. 8). In other words, a metaphorical expression is ambiguous because it could be received as either (1) both metaphoric and literal meaning, (2) metaphoric meaning only, or (3) literal meaning only.

Engstrøm (1996) then further explain that metaphor could also become ambiguous due to the multiple paraphrasing of its metaphorical predicate (p. 15). For example, the phrase *"man is a wolf"* can be interpreted in multiple ways from the paraphrase of *wolf* (p. 16).

## 7. Taskmaster (TV show)

Taskmaster is a TV Show that aired in the UK created by comedian Alex Horne. The concept was of a typical British panel show, where the contestants of celebrity and/or comedians make a panel where they trade banters and witty jokes about a certain topic to get points from the host. Panel shows usually did not have prize for the winner like a typical game show. Instead, it is done just to gain approval from other participants, the host, and especially the viewers at studio and home (Czajkowski, 2011).

Taskmaster then became unique from the typical panel show as they have (1) in a series of 5-10 episodes (aside from the TV specials that had just 1 or 2), there will be a set of 5 contestants (usually comedians) who fight for points, instead of revolving participants each episode, (2) while in typical panel game the participants just trade banters and witty jokes for points, in Taskmaster the contestants done a set of task for points, (3) instead of bantering about the current world affairs, the contestants bantered about their and others' attempts on the task to gain the host's favour, lastly (4) there are prize given to the contestant that had the most points at the end of each episode, and at the end of a series as the champion of that series, which made the show at times felt competitive like a game show.

The show was at first a gig done by Alex Horne with 20 comedians at the Edinburgh Comedy Festival for two years, before picked up by Avalon Television for its current inception on tv (Gamble, 2022). The UK version of the show was aired on Dave in 2016 until 2020 when it moved to Channel 4 starting series 10.

At the time of writing, the show had 15 series with 6 tv special episodes, which were Champions of Champions where champions from 5 consecutive series gathered to determine the best champions between them, and New Year's Treat where 5 media personalities and celebrities who may not possible to participate in regular series gathered for one episode of Taskmaster competition.

In the show, aside from the 5 contestants, there are two key persons which was the host whom also the essential part of the show's formula:

a. Taskmaster's Assistant

Played by comedian and creator of the show, Alex Horne, the Taskmaster's Assistant on the show had the role to create and giving the task to the contestant, while also refereeing their attempts and assisting them to some extend with what is needed for executing the task given.

b. The Taskmaster

Played by comedian Greg Davies, the titular Taskmaster's job in the show was to assess contestants' attempts at the task — especially at more subjective tasks — with points from one to five as their score.

In the show of taskmaster, there are varieties of task that is given to the contestants. These tasks generally categorized into four:

a. Prize Task

Prize task was a type of task where the contestant is given a description of an item to bring as the prize for the winner of that episode. The best item that fits the criteria according to the Taskmaster wins. For example, *best piece of memorabilia.*

b. Field Task

Field task was where the tasks were given and done outside the studio separately (unless instructed otherwise), either in the Taskmaster's House set, or another outdoor set that change each season. Field tasks mostly done individually but there were also tasks that done in teams. In team tasks, the teams were set fixed for an entire season. Other than that, field task may be given to only one contestant, a solo task.

c. Live Task

Live task was when the contestants do a task in the studio in front of the audience. Like field task this may be given individually or in team, but the team members in live task is shuffled sometimes.

d. Tie-Breaker Task

Tie-breaker task was only done/shown if there was a tie between two or more contestants in the episode. It may be done pre-recorded like field task, or done impromptu on the studio. The winner not given extra point but immediately dubbed as that episode's winner.